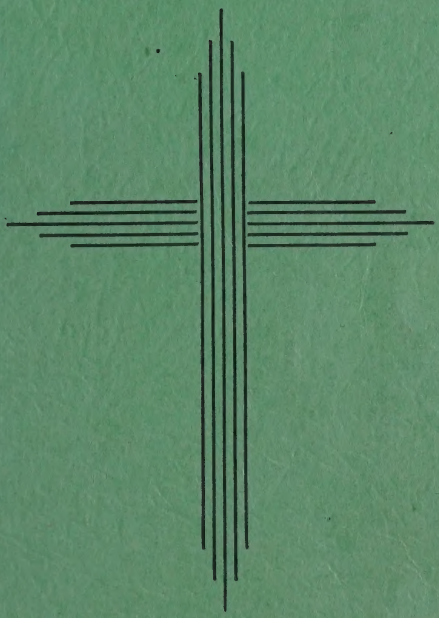
HISTORY

of

Sarpsborg Congregation

1872--1957



John O. Johanson, *Pastor*

Dalton, Minnesota

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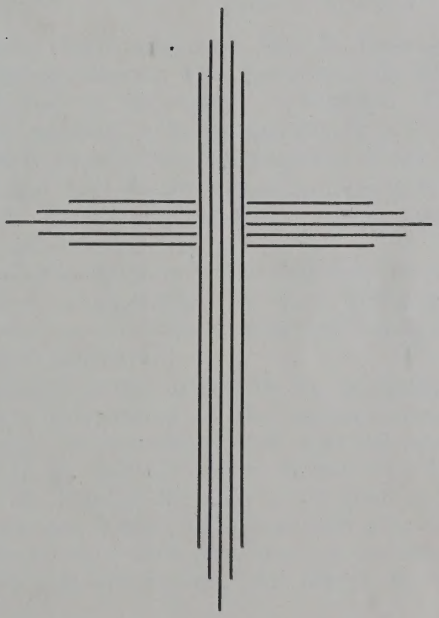

John O. Johanson, *Pastor*

Dalton, Minnesota

NAME

It may be news to most of our members today that "Sarpsborg" was not the name given to the congregation at that historic meeting in Mr. Rovang's log house home 85 years ago. Article I of the constitution adopted at that meeting reads as follows:

"This congregation's name shall be 'The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Tumuli and adjoining towns, Otter Tail County, Minnesota,' abbreviated form, Tumuli Congreation."

But that long, and even in its shortened form, unappealing name did not last long. On November 25, 1875—less than three years after its organization—the congregation was incorporated with the present name, "The Evangelical Lutheran Sarpsborg Congregation." One cannot but marvel at the wisdom of the founding fathers who had the vision to eliminate the word "Norwegian" from the name of our congregation. We in Sarpsborg have a special reason to feel that way when we reflect on the assistance given the congregation through the years by members with other nationality backgrounds.

It has interested me very much to know the reason why Sarpsborg, the name of a city located in southern Norway, not far to the east from Oslo, was chosen as the name of our congregation. It's a very old historic town and is said to have been at one time the capital of Norway. Today, on account of abundant water power furnished by Glomma, Norway's longest and largest river, Sarpsborg is one of the most important industrial cities in Norway. Many years ago I asked Knute Brandvold, who had been a Sarpsborg member from its earliest days, what his understanding was about the Sarpsborg name. His explanation was that while there was general agreement about getting away from the township name it was difficult to find a name that would be favorably considered by a decisive majority of the members. Many of the members had come from Nordland and they wished to have a name reminiscent of that part of their homeland. Other members—and they, too, were numerous and vocal—who had come from Østerdalen wanted a name that would sound familiar to them.

But both groups venerated and loved their pastor who with his folks had lived in or near Sarpsborg. When, therefore, that name for the congregation was proposed it was willingly and generously approved.

FIRST CHURCH

Here, as in all pioneer settlements, services were first held in homes or school houses. In its early years the congregation was divided into two districts, the Dane Prairie–Tumuli boundary line marking the division between them. Services in the northern district were to be held in the A. Bahle home and in the southern district they were to be held "in the school house." That referred undoubtedly to the little log school house located on the east-west section line a short distance south of what is now the Madson home. Very few people now remember that there ever was a school house in that location, but that little log house was the forebear, so to speak, of the substantial building which now houses the school children in what was then, and is now, School District No. 8 in Otter Tail County. Designating the meeting place for services in the southern district merely with the words, "in the school house," is not strange when we remember that it was in the near-by Rovang home that the congregation had its beginning.

The first discussion by the congregation of the matter of building a church was at a meeting held May 16, 1873. It was then voted that the church should be built "near the hill, not to exceed ¼ of a mile from it." That language indicates the site on which the present school house was later built.

No further action in the matter was taken, however, until April 7, 1874, when it was voted to subscribe money for the proposed church. A building committee was elected at this meeting consisting of Knute Brandvold, Andrew Bahle, Carl Steien and Peder Løkstad. About a year later the congregation voted to change the location to the present site, described in the minutes as "a beautiful location a little farther to the south," provided a lot could be secured there. Mr. Brandvold was asked to find the owner of the land and negotiate for the purchase of a lot. He and Christoffer Martinson were elected to subscribe and collect money for the building fund. In November, 1875, deed to the present site had been secured and building operations were promptly begun. The record shows that $186.72 was paid for material for the church plus $54.00 for freight to the village of Herman in Grant County, then the nearest railroad point to which the material could be shipped.

It is related that on a certain day a caravan of teams—mostly, if not exclusively, oxteams—started for Herman, 40 miles to the south and returned the following day with all the material used in building the little church. And a small church it really was, only 26' by 32' with a small inclosed porch. It stood on the site of the present church, but the entrance was from the west.

HYMN BOOK CONTROVERSY

Disagreement about what hymn book should be used by the congregation seems to have stirred up deep interest among its members in those early days. So much so, indeed, that it must have been a matter of bitter controversy. Guldberg's had been used for a time but some members wished to have it replaced with Landstad's.

The leader of that group was Christian H. Urseth, an able and educated man who held many positions of trust and influence in the young congregation. As "klokker" he led the congregational singing at services; he was the parochial school teacher and served for some years as secretary of the congregation. On March 1, 1877, he had this to say in his minutes of a previous meeting about those who bitterly opposed his motion to introduce the Landstad hymnal.

"After much talking for and against, during which, especially by older members, words and expressions were used which showed not only ignorance but prejudice and shameful partiality and distrust of Landstad and his book, the motion was withdrawn and the choice was then between Guldberg's and Hauge's with the result that Hauge's was approved by 15 votes." Mr. Urseth's defense of Landstad and his hymnal, unheeded at the time, doubtless contributed to its adoption some years later.

Christian Urseth had in a marked degree the restless spirit of the frontier. This must have been his second stopping place since he had come to America. From here the family moved to near Fisher in Polk County. Later he joined his pastor, Christian Saugstad, in a trek into the wild and rugged Bella Coola valley in British Columbia.

His son, Hans Urseth, a lad between 9 and 14 years when the family belonged to Sarpsborg, became a professor of theology at Augsburg Seminary. His death as a comparatively young man was a severe blow to the school where he was highly esteemed and loved.

GRANDMA TORGERSON

One of the first funerals held in the new church was that of Grandma Torgerson. She was the mother of Ole Torgerson, one of the earliest settlers in Tumuli, whose home was located about one mile south of Dalton. The family had come from Norway about 1860 and had first settled in Carver county in the southern part of the state. There they were caught in the Indian outbreak of 1862. The family barricaded themselves in their log house home and the women and children were told to lie down on the floor

near the walls in order to be out of sight and better protected from shots fired at the house by Indians concealed in the nearby woods. Naturally, the members of the family were terrified by the attack, but not Grandma Torgerson. It made her angry. Wrathfully she exclaimed: "If those pesky redskins are not more careful, they will keep on till they kill somebody.'

Grandma's real name was Marit Bersvensdatter. She was born in 1794. George Washington was then president of the country that later in life became Grandma Torgerson's homeland. She died in 1877, 83 years of age. The year of her birth engraved on the modest tombstone which marks her grave near the Sarpsborg Church is probably one of the earliest dates recorded in any cemetery in this part of the state.

PAROCHIAL SCHOOL

The interest of the pioneer fathers and mothers in the religious education of their children stands out sharply in the early history of Sarpsborg. In that respect it differed little, if at all, from other pioneer congregations. Parochial school teachers were usually elected every year with other officers of the congregation. The monthly salary in the beginning was only $20.00, increased later to the almost equally modest sum of $25.00. As already indicated Christian H. Urseth, a "seminarist" from Norway, was the first parochial school teacher and served in that capacity five years till he moved away. His successor was Esten E. Flotten who had attended Augsburg Seminary for some time before he settled in the Sarpsborg community. Mr. Flotten served as Sarpsborg's parochial school teacher for nearly 40 years.

While religious instruction was the main purpose of these schools, and the training given in that field was as a rule both conscientious and thorough, a considerable part of the pupils' time was devoted to subjects having a general cultural value. It can, therefore, be truthfully said that for the immigrant children of that day the parochial school supplemented and aided the work of the public school.

Now, the Sunday school has taken over the work which the parochial school sought to do in those early days. May we never fail to appreciate and support the effort of those who on an all year basis are carrying on a labor of love in our Sunday school! They are among the builders of a more God-fearing and dedicated Sarpsborg Congregation in the years to come.

PARISH CONNECTIONS

Since its organization in 1872 Sarpsborg has been associated in the same parish with Tordenskjold and Kvam congregations. Our Savior's congregation in Fergus Falls (now Bethlehem) was also included in the parish during the pastorates of Rev. J. A. Bergh and Rev. N. Iverson. During that period a small parsonage located on a lot adjoining Our Savior's Church had been built jointly by the congregations in the parish. Following the resignation of Rev. Iverson in 1885 the Fergus Falls congregation withdrew from the parish. Since then, for a period of 52 years, the parish consisted of three congregations, Kvam, Tordenskjold and Sarpsborg. The Zion congregation in Dalton was added to the parish in 1937.

It appears that in the disposition of their joint interest in the parsonage some disagreement arose among the four congregations. Our Savior's claimed that they had $50.00 coming from the other three. Sarpsborg disposed of that claim by adopting the following motion: "According to the minutes of the joint meeting in Fergus Falls, Sarpsborg can see no reason why we should owe said congregation anything except that we should love one another." Since both sides doubtlessly believed themselves in the right, if Sarpsborg's summary judgment was received in good parts by the Fergus Falls congregation, without too serious reservations, then it must be said that Our Savior's demonstration of charity and good-will was at least as convincing as Sarpsborg's.

BUILDING OF PRESENT CHURCH

In the course of a few years the little pioneer church became wholly inadequate for the needs of a growing congregation. The first action in the matter of providing for a more adequate church building was taken April 4, 1887, when a committee was appointed to consider plans for improving and enlarging the old church. Nothing came of this plan until it was revived five years later, November 14, 1892, when the definite decision was taken that the proposed improvement should be made in the spring of 1893. At that meeting a building committee was elected consisting of the following members: Ole H. Sageng, L. S. Folkedal, Martin Rovang, Ole Solsten and B. H. Brown. The committee was instructed to subscribe and collect funds for the proposed repair and enlargement of the church. To a meeting of the congregation February 25, 1893, the chairman of the committee reported that $973.25 had been subscribed; also that the committee recommended the adoption of the following motion: "Because we find that it is necessary that the church be made both wider and longer, we propose that the old church be torn down and that we erect a building of the

following dimensions: nave 30' by 40', chancel 20' by 22', tower 10' by 10'."

The committee's recommendation was unanimously adopted and the church was built during the summer of 1893. The master builder was Ole Solsten, a member of the building committee.

Mr. Solsten was more than a competent carpenter. He had the vision and ability to unite beauty and visual appeal with service and usefulness in public buildings. Convincing proof of that statement has come to me from men who have become acquainted with the Sarpsborg church only as they have observed it from the adjoining highway.

The church was dedicated July 10, 1895, by Professor Sven Oftedal from Augsburg Seminary assisted by the following pastors: Elias Berlie, P. T. Peterson, O. Ellingson, Arne Berg and A. J. Hulteng.

REVIVAL

The material progress of the congregation indicated by the erection of the new church was gratifying to both the pastor and the members, but in the providence of God a greater good came to Sarpsborg in the spiritual revival which it experienced shortly after the new church had been completed. In Sarpsborg, as in many congregations throughout the Northwest, the revival in the nineties touched the hearts and transformed the lives of many of its members, especially among the young people. Attendance at church services increased greatly and prayer meetings in the homes of the congregation became general.

LARS SKREFSRUD'S VISIT

In two of the late years of the last century many Lutheran communities in America had an opportunity to meet and hear the Santal missionary, Lars Skrefsrud, who was undoubtedly one of the world's most outstanding Christian leaders in his day. He had accepted Pastor Berlie's invitation to visit the Dalton community and a Sunday service was arranged for him. It was an outdoor meeting in the Knute Brandvold grove where the third annual conference of the Lutheran Free Church was held a few years later. What is now a barren hillside—the result of the severe drought years—was then covered with big oak trees. It was a beautiful mid-summer day and a large audience greeted the missionary. Born in 1840, Skrefsrud was in the prime of mature manhood when he was here. His alert and expressive features impressed all who

had a personal meeting with him. That he was a frankly out-spoken man appeared clearly from a critical remark he made in his sermon about the exceedingly long invocation of a visiting lay preacher at the beginning of the service.

Skrefsrud's parents were poor folks. But a far more serious handicap for Lars and the other children was that their father was so indifferent or so lazy that instead of working steadily to help support the family he often sent the children out to beg. However, his mother was a sincere Christian woman who encouraged and helped her ambitious son every way she could in the situation of extreme poverty and distress imposed on the family by the indolent father. But his mother died while Lars was yet young and her death, quite nearly, marked the beginning of the saddest and most tragic years of his life . When, after months of agony and incessant prayer, he won assurance that his sins were forgiven, he formed the unalterable determination to become a missionary. That hope was finally realized when a Berlin missionary society sent him and Mr. and Mrs. Børreson to India to work among the inhabitants of Santalistan.

Skrefsrud had a truly brilliant mind. Mostly by self-study he mastered Greek, Latin, Hebrew and several modern languages. But with all his learning and accomplishments he was a humble man of God who left for the Santals—and for the world—an imperishable legacy of Christian devotion and service.

SARPSBORG'S SONS IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

A result of the revival which visited Sarpsborg was that for a small congregation a comparatively large number of young men dedicated their lives to the Christian ministry in the Lutheran Church. The list of the sons of Sarpsborg who have entered the ministry, with the year of their ordination, is as follows:

Halvor O. Sageng 1902

Ole C. Dahlager 1903

John A. Stavney 1903

John A. Paulson 1905

Hans O. Sageng 1907

Oscar Paulson 1916

Jacob Langsjoen 1934

Emil C. Martinson 1949

SYNODICAL AFFILIATIONS

From its organization until 1890 Sarpsborg was affiliated with the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Conference. The record fails to show any formal action establishing this affiliation but the congregation always elected delegates to the annual meeting of that synod and otherwise supported the conference by making annual contributions to its school, Augsburg Seminary, and to its missions. It also took part in the endowment drive for Augsburg in the eighties.

Sarpsborg followed other Conference congregations into the United Lutheran Church merger in 1890. That connection was terminated at the annual meeting of the congregation November 11, 1896. In 1895 the congregation sent the following delegates to the Friends of Augsburg held at Willmar: E. E. Flotten, Ole N. Fossan, Hans Sageng, Ole Tande, John Rovang and C. J. Dahlager. At its annual meeting November 26, 1912, Sarpsborg voted unanimously to approve the Leading Principles of the Lutheran Free Church.

HOST TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On Sarpsborg's invitation the third annual conference of the Lutheran Free Church was held here in 1899. The meeting was held in a large tent set up in a grove on the Knute Brandvold farm adjoining Dalton. It was a well attended conference; the registered membership was 69 pastors and 204 lay delegates. All who attended the conference were entertained free of charge. Naturally, in an exclusively rural community, the delegates were quartered in homes scattered over a wide area. Since all transportation in those days was with horse drawn vehicles it is not easy to understand, from the viewpoint of today, how that problem actually was solved. Whatever success Sarpsborg had in taking care of the hundreds who attended the conference was very largely due to the generous assistance it received from members of neighboring congregations.

PASTORS

Only seven pastorates span the entire 85 years since the Sarpsborg congregation was organized. They are:

Johan Arnt Bergh	1872 - 1877
Nils Iverson	1879 - 1884
Ole Olson	1886 - 1890
Elias Berlie	1892 - 1937
Joseph Melby	1937 - 1950
Rudolfs Krafts	1950 - 1953
John O. Johanson	1954 -

During the interim periods indicated above the congregation was served by neighboring pastors: I. Taralson of Battle Lake and Christian Saugstad of Osakis during 1878; A. Wold of Fergus Falls and T. Moen of Vining during 1885; and B. B. Haugan of Fergus Falls during 1891. Rev. Nils Heierman served as Iverson's assistant in 1883. For some months before Rev. Johanson assumed the pastorate in 1954 the congregation was served by two theological students from Augsburg Seminary. They were David Rokke, now associate pastor of St. Luke's congregation in Minneapolis and Edward E. Swanson, now a chaplain stationed at the U. S. Air Force Base, Amarillo, Texas.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY

In the early days of the congregation the participation of the young people in its affairs took the form of an organization called the Young People's Society. In the Norwegian era it was known as the "Ungdom's Forening." In addition to its participation in congregational matters, the organization interested itself in cultural and educational activities. It frequently sponsored Fourth of July celebrations. I remember especially one such celebration held nearly 60 years ago in the grove adjoining the Milton Erickson home. The guest speaker was Professor Wilhelm Petterson from Augsburg Seminary, one of the most brilliant and eloquent men it has been my pleasure to hear.

In those days outdoor celebrations and meetings were more frequent than they are now. A usual place at which they were held was the grove adjoining the church on the north side. Fairly large oak trees were there affording excellent shade before they were destroyed during the devastating drought years. Now the highway has taken over practically all the ground used for those meetings.

A NOTABLE PUBLICITY WINDFALL

All Sarpsborg members will agree that their church in its setting presents a beautiful picture when they approach it on the highway from the southeast. We have convincing evidence that fact has been equally apparent to artistic strangers who have observed it from the highway.

Some eight or ten years ago I was visiting the church for some purpose when I observed that a fine elderly man had stopped his car at the church driveway and was looking at our church with more than casual interest. When I went over to him he introduced himself as T. A. Erickson, an employee of General Mills, the great milling firm in Minneapolis. His job was to interest the rural people of the state in the work of the 4-H Clubs. The "4-H" expression stands for Head, Heart, Hands and Health.

On the front cover of a booklet Mr. Erickson held in his hand I noticed a fine picture of the Sarpsborg church. When I asked him how that came about, he explained that when he had finished writing the text of his little book he wanted the picture of a rural church on the cover of his booklet. In search for such a picture he went to the photograph files of the company and there he found the Sarpsborg picture. Evidently, a traveling professional photographer had been impressed by the appearance of our church as seen from the highway. Through the years thousands of these booklets have been published and circulated so that today an attractive picture of the Sarpsborg church can be found in thousands of Minnesota homes.

FORMER ANNIVERSARIES

When Sarpsborg in June, 1957, observes its 85th anniversary it will be the fifth event of that kind in the history of the congregation.

On Sunday, June 20, 1922, Sarpsborg observed the fiftieth anniversary of its organization. It was a truly memorable event in the history of the congregation because the guest speaker was the venerable pioneer pastor, Johan Arnt Bergh, who had presided at the organization of the congregation in the Nils Rovang home a half century earlier and had served as its first pastor for nearly six years. I have been told that Pastor Bergh often got around on skiis to meet his preaching appointments during the rugged winters of those early days.

The seventieth anniversary was commemorated Sunday, June 2, 1942, with Dr. T. O. Burntvedt, president of the Lutheran Free Church, as guest speaker. Dr. Burntvedt preached on the day's text at the morning festival service, and delivered the anniversary address at the afternoon session.

The seventy-fifth anniversary was observed on Sunday, August 17, 1947. Dr. Bernhard Christensen, president of Augsburg, was the guest speaker. At the forenoon festival service the sermon, "The Household of God," was preached by Dr. Christensen.

At the afternoon memorial service, after welcoming remarks by Pastor Melby, Dr. Christensen delivered the anniversary address. Greetings to the congregation were brought by Pastor H. Framstad of Battle Lake and Pastor H. Muus of Fergus Falls.

Sarpsborg's eightieth anniversary was observed Sunday, November 2, 1952. Dr. T. O. Burntvedt was the guest speaker and preached the sermon at the forenoon festival service. At the afternoon session, Pastor Krafts presiding, Dr. Burntvedt delivered the anniversary address, greetings were brought by Pastors Nypen and Evenson. The service was closed with an expression by the chairman of gratitude and thanks to all who had helped to make the day a memorable event in the life of the congregation.

LADIES' AID SOCIETY

In any account of pioneer days there are frequent references to the "founding fathers." In the Sarpsborg congregation—and doubtlessly the same is true of other congregations—it would be a grave injustice not to acknowledge just as fully the labor and devotion of the founding mothers.

The Sarpsborg Aid had its beginning at a meeting held on January 30, 1877. The 17 charter members were:

Mrs. N. N. Rovang
Mrs. Karvline Bangen
Mrs. Helge Thoreson
Mrs. O. Engebretson
Mrs. Christian Urseth
Martha Hansel
Mrs. Ragnhild Korstad
Miss Anne Kvernstoen
Miss Lokstad
Mrs. Goro Hansel
Mrs. E. Flotten
Mrs. Randi Hansel
Miss Anne Steien
Miss Marit Sønmor
Mrs. Johanna Naeseth
Mrs. Dineson

Pastor J. A. Bergh who had presided at the meeting in the Rovang home when the congregation was organized also helped in the organization of the Ladies' Aid Society. Since Mrs. Rovang's name heads the list of charter members it is very likely that the Aid society as well as the congregation had its beginning in the Rovang home. Mrs. Christian Urseth was the first president of the Aid. It is not strange, therefore, that in later years, when Mrs. Urseth's son, Hans, had become a professor of theology at Augsburg, and had written the beautiful gospel song beginning with the words, "One resolve, one resolve, you who falter and fear"

(Concordia No. 247), that it was a favorite hymn to sing at meetings of the Sarpsborg Aid Society.

The auction sale receipts were in the main divided between home and foreign missions and Augsburg. Also remembered in the distribution of funds were needy students and pastors, and the congregation. It is impressive to learn that from the modest beginning of $41.53 – the amount of the first sale – the Sarpsborg Ladies' Aid Society has, during the 45 years from 1877 to 1932, given to the congregation a total donation of $1,740.00. During the same period the Aid society has given to home and foreign missions, schools and other benevolences, a total sum of $6,269.00. Itemized figures for the 25 years since 1932 are not now available, but it is conservative to say that the totals for those years will equal or exceed the totals of the former period.

The officers of the Sarpsborg Ladies' Aid Society at this, its 85th anniversary, are as follows:

President ..... Mrs. Orion Dahlager
Vice President ..... Mrs. Otto Kvernstoen
Secretary ..... Miss Mildred Olson
Treasurer ..... Mrs. John Olson

RECENT ADDITION TO SARPSBORG CHURCH

When the present Sarpsborg church was built in 1893, adequate and really serviceable basements—such as those in the two Dalton churches—were practically unknown to church builders and planners, especially for rural communities. All that was thought really necessary was a hole in the ground for a heating plant of some sort.

The matter of building a basement had been discussed at some meetings of the congregation, but no action had been taken. In the early part of 1956, however, the board of trustees was authorized to build an addition to the church that would meet the needs of the congregation even better than a basement. Under the efficient direction of George Melby, a member of the Kvam congregation, building operations were started at once and completed before winter set in. The addition is a large room, 26 feet by 32 feet, with full basement, built onto the east wall of the chancel. It has an outside entrance on the south wall. The entrance from the church is by a door adjoining the pulpit. A modern oilburning furnace has been installed and the interior of the church has been repainted. The total cost of these improvements has been approximately $7,000.00. That is fully twice the cost of the church when it was built 64 years ago.

The congregation will in many respects have a new church when it meets in June to celebrate its 85th anniversary.

ELIAS BERLIE

1861 - 1948

Any review of Sarpsborg's history during the past 85 years would be incomplete with according to Elias Berlie his rightful place in that history. He was Sarpsborg's pastor for an uninterrupted period of 45 years, and to his earnestness and devotion in that service, more than to any other human influence, can we attribute the revival that blest Sarpsborg in the nineties.

Elias Berlie was born in Valdal, Nordalen near Bergen, Norway, on April 8, 1861. His parents were Thore and Inger Marta Erickson Berlie. He had one sister, Ellen, the late Mrs. Mons Valdal, wife of Pastor Valdal, who had served churches in Canada, and one brother, the late Martin Thompson of Stanwood, Washington, who had taken the Thompson name in preference to Berlie.

In 1882 he came to Minneapolis where he attended the preparatory department at Augsburg Seminary until 1884. That year he returned to Norway where he attended Hamar Seminary from 1885 to 1887. It was during his student days at Hamar he met his bride-to-be, Elie Møistad to whom, after his return to Minneapolis, he was married on October 1, 1887 by the late Rev. Elias Aas. He continued his seminary studies at Augsburg until 1890 when he was graduated from the theological department and was ordained that same year on call from a home mission congregation at St. Hilaire, Marshall County, Minnesota. In 1892 he resigned from his pastorate at St. Hilaire and accepted the call from the Dalton parish, consisting of Kvam, Tordenskjold and Sarpsborg congregations.

Pastor Berlie loved to read and did considerable writing, including poems, songs and other thought-provoking articles. He edited LUTHERSK TIDSKRIFT for many years and served as secretary and treasurer of the Board of Home Missions, a church activity in which he was deeply interested. He loved the Lutheran Free Church and was deeply concerned about its welfare and future.

Some of his hobbies were singing and playing his guitar, building, making tools and different mechanical oddities, mechanical drawing, fishing and hunting.

Pastor and Mrs. Berlie's children are as follows: Thora, the widow of the late Dr. Godward, presently living at Stanwood, Washington; Magna, Mrs. O. K. Lehmann, also of Stanwood; Olav, principal of the public school at Hunter, Washington; and Esther, Mrs. Joseph Melby, of Lake Lillian, Minnesota. The grandchildren are Beverly Berlie, Mrs. Jack Leggee of Seattle; Julie Ann Berlie of Hunter; and Naomi and Rebecca Melby of Lake Lillian. The

great grandchildren are Michale and Richard Berlie Leggee, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Leggee.

It will interest and gratify Sarpsborg members to learn that one of Pastor Berlie's grandchildren, Naomi Melby, a graduate of Augsburg College, who was a teacher in the high school at Hutchinson last year, will this fall have the unique experience of teaching in a high school in Honolulu, the capital city of the Hawaiian Islands, located in the mid-Pacific about 3,000 miles west of San Francisco.

In his long service of 45 years in the Dalton parish, Pastor Berlie had to come to grips with a situation with which neither his predecessors nor his successors had to contend. I refer to the changeover from Norwegian to English in the church service, and in the religious instruction of children. It was a change which it would seem Pastor Berlie was ill prepared to meet because he was a man of mature years when he came to America and practically all his formal schooling had been in the language of his fatherland.

But the change had to be made because Norwegian had practically disappeared in the homes of the congregation, especially among the young folks. In justice to Pastor Berlie it must be said that he met that situation with understanding and resignation. I say with resignation because I know he loved the language of his native land, and certainly the Norwegian he spoke was that language in its purest and best form. He began the change by delivering his sermons in English even when he felt that he needed a manuscript to help him do so. But not for long. Student and scholar that he was, he soon mastered English so well that he did not need the help of any manuscript to deliver his sermons in the English language.

Elias Berlie died at his home in Dalton on April 6, 1948, at the age of 87. Mrs. Berlie, who throughout their long married life had been a wonderful help to him, died in May, 1949, age 82. They are buried in the Dalton cemetery.

To all who have so willingly and generously assisted in the preparation of this review of Sarpsborg's history I want to express my sincere appreciation and thanks.

As we gratefully commemorate the eighty-fifth anniversary of the congregation we venerate and love, we earnestly pray that God may continue to bless Sarpsborg and preserve it in faithful obedience to its divine mission!

—OLE O. SAGENG

PRESENT MEMBERSHIP OF SARPSBORG CONGREGATION

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Andrus
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Berg
LaVern Berg
Joyce Berg
Mr. and Mrs. Orris Bergan
Marcia Bergan
Faye Bergan
Mrs. Pauline Clauson
Mrs. Elsie Dahlager
Esther Dahlager
Mr. and Mrs. Orion Dahlager
Mrs. Anna Enger
Clarence Enger
Orris Enger
Mrs. Anna Erickson
Mr. and Mrs. Milton Erickson
Gerald Erickson
Robert Erickson
Linda Erickson
Richard Erickson
Mrs. Walter Erickson
Peggy Erickson
Wallace Erickson
Eileen Erickson
Darlene Erickson
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Forsberg
Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Forsberg
Anna Fossan
Emil Fossan
Mrs. Kari Fossan
Mr. and Mrs. Nels Fossan
Olaf Fossan
Ole Fossan
Olga Fossan
Mrs. Gordon Grage
Mark Grage
Mrs. Harry Hall
Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Halvorson
Ellen Halvorson
Theodore Hjermstad
Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Johnson
Marlene Johnson
Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Jorgens
James Jorgens
Mrs. Elmer Knutson
Carl Kvernstoen
Ole Kvernstoen
Mr. and Mrs. Otto Kvernstoen
David Kvernstoen
Kristie Kvernstoen
Constance Kvernstoen
Steven Kvernstoen
George Langsjoen
Lev Langsjoen
Mr. and Mrs. Swen Langsjoen
Patricia Langsjoen
Gay Langsjoen
Roy Langsjoen
Mr. and Mrs. Christian Larson
Mr. and Mrs. Tollef Martinson
Mrs. Bernice Olson
Donald Olson
Mr. and Mrs. John Olson
Mildred Olson
Olaf Olson
Mr. and Mrs. Ragnar Olson
Donna Olson
Anita Olson
Dean Olson
Maureen Olson
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Peterson
Nancy Peterson
Mr. and Mrs. Allen Rovang
Mr. and Mrs. Otto Rovang
Wayne Rovang
Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin Rude
Gene Rude
Douglas Rude
Gloria Rude
Joyce Rude
Daryl Rude
Karl Sageng
Mathilda Sageng
Mr. and Mrs. Ole Sageng
Richard Sageng
Mrs. Andrew Severson
Alfred Viger
Bessie Viger
Ovidia Viger
Mrs. Dorvin Vikesland

Sarpsborg's Constitution

ARTICLE I

The name of this congregation is The Evangelical Lutheran Sarpsborg Congregation.

ARTICLE II

Section 1. This congregation believes and confesses that the Holy Scriptures, the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God revealed for the salvation of man and is the only source and rule of faith, doctrine and life in the congregation.

Section 2. This congregation adheres to the old standard symbols of the Christian Church, Luthers Small Catechism and the unaltered Augsburg Confession.

ARTICLE III

Section 1. The congregation is the body of Christ, Col. 1:24; it is a city on a hill that cannot be hid, Math. 5:14; the Zion out of which God shineth, Psalm 50:2. Hence every member should through faith and by use of the means of Grace be united with the Head and Lord of the congregation, Jesus Christ.

Section 2. Every member of the congregation shall, according to his measure of faith, use the gifts with which God has endowed him for the upbuilding of the congregation and the extension of God's Kingdom in the manner ordered and prescribed in the Word of God, and shall contribute toward the expenses of the congregation according to his means.

ARTICLE IV

Section 1. Adults who are received into membership in the congregation must:

1. Be baptized in the Christian baptism.
2. By confession and life show that they seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.
3. Subscribe to this constitution.

Section 2. All children of parents who are members become members of the congregation by baptism.

Section 3. All confirmed members who have attained the age of 21 years and are not under church censure are entitled to vote in the congregation.

ARTICLE V

Section 1. The congregation seeks zealously to maintain purity of doctrine and to promote uprightness of life among its members, and if anyone acts in a manner unworthy of his high calling as a Christian, it strives in brotherly love by exhortation and prayer to lead the erring one to repentance and restore him to faith.

Section 2. Discipline shall be exercised according to Math. 18: 15–18 and I Cor. 5.

Section 3. Every case of discipline shall be brought before the congregation by the church council.

ARTICLE VI

Section 1. This congregation recognizes no superior ecclesiastical authority or government but manages its own affairs subject to the authority of the Word and Spirit of God.

Section 2. This authority shall be exercised at meetings of the congregation at which not less than seven (7) voting members shall be present and its acts and resolutions shall be valid provided proper notice of the meeting has been given.

Section 3. Notice of meetings of the congregation shall be given by the pastor or by the chairman of the board of deacons at its public services at least 10 days before the meeting is to be held.

Section 4. The congregation shall hold its annual meeting some time in the months of November or December.

Section 5. Special meetings shall be held on petition of five (5) voting members of the congregation.

ARTICLE VII

Section 1. The officers of the congregation are:

1. Pastor
2. Secretary
3. Deacons
4. Trustees
5. Deaconesses (Rom. 16:1)

Section 2. The pastor is the shepherd of the congregation. His election and discharge must take place at a legally called meeting of the congregation and shall require a ⅔ majority of the votes cast. When a pastor wishes to sever his connection with the congregation he shall give notice thereof 3 months in advance.

Section 3. The secretary shall keep the records of the congregational meetings and preserve the archives of the congregation. He shall be elected at the annual meeting for one year.

Section 4. The deacons shall assist the pastor in the spiritual care of the congregation and constitute with him, or in case of a

vacancy in the pastorate, then alone, the church council which shall watch over the spiritual condition of the congregation, minister to needs of the poor of the congregation, and ascertain whether applicants for membership have the necessary qualifications. One-third of the number of decons shall be elected at the annual meeting with a three (3) year term of service.

Section 5. The duty of the deaconesses shall be to visit the sick and needy and offer them such aid and comfort as they may be able to give.

Section 6. The trustees shall have charge of the temporal affairs of the congregation and shall elect one of their members as treasurer. They shall be elected in the same manner as the deacons.

ARTICLE IX

The property of the congregation shall not be disposed of or incumbered unless authorized by a resolution adopted by the congregation by a ⅔ vote.

ARTICLE X

Amendments to this constitution shall be proposed only at an annual meeting of the congregation and shall not be voted upon till at the next annual meeting and shall require a ⅔ vote for its adoption.

OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION

The present officers of the congregation are: Pastor—John O. Johanson; Board of Deacons—Tollef Martinson, Dan Andrus and John Olson. (At the annual meeting in 1956 Mr. Ole Sageng, who had served for many years as a Deacon, was made an honorary member of the Board.) Board of Trustees—Alfred Viger, George Langsjoen (treasurer) and Ole Fossan; Secretary—Nels Fossan; Sunday School Superintendent—Mrs. Ragnar Olson; Sexton—O. N. Rovang; Member of the the Parish Parsonage Committee—Olaf Olson. The Ushers are Goodwin Rude and Milton Erickson, with Arnold Jorgens and Orris Bergan, alternates. Ovidia Viger arranges the altar appointments for the communion services.

FROM THE RECORDS

The records of the congregation show that during its eighty-five year history there have been 698 baptisms, 508 confirmations, 123 marriages and 249 funerals.